AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A method for decontaminating necks of thermoplastic preforms before said performs are blow molded or stretch-blow molded for manufacturing containers, the method comprising:

passing said preforms one after the other through an upstream chamber inside which preform necks move along a given path;

spraying continuously a decontaminating liquid ~~is sprayed continuously~~inside said chamber toward~~towards~~ said path ~~necks of said performs so as to wet inside and outside surfaces of the necks and~~ in such that a manner a fog atmosphere of said decontaminating liquid is maintained inside said chamber with said preform ~~so that said~~ necks being~~are~~ bathed in said fog of decontaminating liquid and with said preform necks having inside and outside surfaces which become wetted by said decontaminating liquid, said fog of decontaminating liquid being caused to flow through said chamber, and

passing then ~~said necks of~~ said preform necks~~preforms~~ being wetted by said decontaminating liquid in front of ultraviolet lamps arranged downstream of said chamber so that said preform necks become entirely irradiated inside and outside~~as to irradiate said necks~~ for at least a minimum predetermined period of time.

2. (canceled).

3. (previously presented): The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the decontaminating product is hydrogen peroxide H_2O_2.

4. (currently amended): ~~An~~A decontaminating installation for the decontamination of necks of thermoplastic preforms intended for being blow molded or stretch-blow molded for manufacturing containers~~while they are moving one after the other to a loading device~~, the installation comprising:

~~a decontamination installation structurally and functionally connected to a preform feeder installation including a means for moving the preforms one after the other, said decontamination installation comprising ultraviolet lamps arranged so that the ultraviolet radiation completely irradiates necks of the moving preforms~~

a preform feeder device which is adapted for moving said preforms one after the other with necks thereof moving along a given patch,

~~wherein said preforms are made of thermoplastic configured to produce containers by blow molding or stretch-blow molding,~~

wherein ~~the decontamination installation also includes, upstream of the ultraviolet lamps, a chamber traversed by said preform movement means of the feeder installation and in which~~ spray means are arranged~~provided~~ inside said chamber and directed substantially in the direction of said path for spraying a decontaminating liquid~~product continuously~~ toward said path and in such a way that a fog atmosphere of said decontaminating liquid is maintained inside said chamber, with ~~necks of~~ said preform~~preforms~~ necks having ~~so as to wet~~ inside and outside surfaces which become wetted by said decontaminating liquid~~of said necks and so as to maintain a fog of the decontaminating product inside said chamber~~,

wherein suction means are connected to said chamber and are arranged so as to cause said fog of said decontamination liquid to flow through said chamber,

wherein an ultraviolet lamp unit is arranged downstream of said chamber so that ultraviolet radiation entirely irradiates said wetted preform necks inside and outside, and

wherein said ultraviolet lamp unit has such a length and said preform feeder device is adapted for moving said preforms one after the other with such a speed that said moving wetted preform necks become entirely irradiated inside and outside for a least a minimum predetermined period of time.

5. (currently amended): The installation as claimed in claim 4, wherein the spray means comprise at least two spray nozzles arranged inside said chamber on either side of said path and above said path, said two spray nozzles being respectively directed substantially in the direction of said path~~one on either side of the preform movement means and above these, with their respective axes substantially aimed in the direction of the necks of the moving preforms~~.

6. (canceled).

7. (currently amended): The installation as claimed in claim 4, wherein said preform feeder device inside the chamber includes~~, the preform movement means are surmounted, above the necks of the preforms, by~~ a rod which has a relatively small~~of a~~ transverse dimension relative to the neck diameter~~smaller than a diameter of the necks~~, and which extends along and above said path so as to be above said preform necks, whereby said~~this~~ rod ~~forming a member that~~

prevents saidthe preforms being lifted up but allows access by thesaid fog of decontaminating product to access thean inside wallswall of the preform necks of the preforms.

8. (currently amended): The installation as claimed in claim 4, wherein saidthe preform feedermovement means device comprisecomprises an inclined slide guide extending through said chamber andslideway down which thesaid preforms slide by gravity one after the other and in that this slideway passes through the chamber.

9. - 16. (canceled).